

BURNT CABINS GRISTMILL
Spanning the South branch of
Little Aughwick Creek
Burnt Cabins
Fulton County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-378

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

BURNT CABINS GRISTMILL
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Location: E of SR 1010 spanning the S branch of
Little Aughwick Creek
Burnt Cabins
Fulton County
Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: ca. 1840

Present Owner: John D. Blattenberger

Present Use: Production of cornmeal, buckwheat, and
wheat flours

Significance: This mill is the best preserved mid-
nineteenth century grist mill in Fulton
County. It is still in operation and is
typical of small-scale grain processing
from the nineteenth century.

Historian: Scott C. Brown, 1990

Project Information: The results of the study of Fulton County
were published in 1994: Kim E. Wallace
(ed), Bedford County and Fulton County,
Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic
Engineering and Industrial Sites
(Washington, D.C.: National Park
Service). The contents of the publication
were transmitted to the Library of
Congress as individual reports. Research
notes, field photos and copies of
historic photos collected during the
project were transmitted to the AIHP
Collection, Special Collections,
Stapleton Library, Indiana University of
Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA 15705.

The Burnt Cabin Mill is a two-and-a-half-story clapboard structure with a corrugated-metal gable roof and double-hung, four-over-four windows. An addition to the south side covers an original door and a covered porch was added to the east side. An approximately 1,000'-long millrace feeds the mill from a dam at Little Aughwick Creek located just southeast of the mill. The millrace enters the mill on the east wall and wood watergates there control the flow of water. The Pennsylvania Turnpike crosses the property between the mill dam and the race. The mill, adjacent residence, and outbuildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Most of the mill's machinery is original. On the basement level at the northeast corner is a 14' wood overshot waterwheel. Near the southeast corner is a 14' steel overshot waterwheel. A bullgear transfers the power from the wheel to the machinery above. Within the small addition on the south wall is a diesel engine. At the center is a wooden auger and chutes used to carry the flour to the floors above.

Grinding and bagging are done on the first floor. There are wood hoppers used to chute grain from the second floor for grinding. Three runs or sets of burr stones in their wood cases can be worked at the same time. There are wood shafts connected from the bullgear on the floor below. On this level is a charcoal roaster (converted to gas power) which was used to prepare the corn for grinding by heating it to allow the oil in the kernels to dry. Along the north wall are bins which hold the final mixed product to be bagged. Mounted on the east wall are flour bags imprinted with "John Baldwin Mill" and "C. Stull Baldwin Mill."

Refining and mixing is done on the second floor. Here there are pulleys, gear belts, mixers, and a cleaner/shaker machine. There is also a flour bolt manufactured by the Philadelphia firm of Griscom & Company and several machines called "Patent Interelevating Flour Dressers" manufactured by the Aug. Wolf & Company Works of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. The third-floor attic is used for storage of spare parts for the mill including wooden gears and shafts. A somewhat rare piece of machinery, a cockelburr machine, is stored here along with an Aug. Wolf & Company "No. 1 Single Suck Scalper". The flour bolts sifted flour through cloth mesh and revolving reels to different consistencies, and the scalpers were flour bolts that separated coarser from finer flour.

Adjacent to the mill itself is the miller's house, a log barn, an ice house, and a stone foundation wall. This foundation is probably from the first mill on the property built about 1770.

The first tax list for Dublin Township in 1773 lists John Burd with a gristmill. This is believed to be the first mill on this site

built by Frederick Dubbs for Burd in 1770. Burd's gristmill ground meal for the residents of Forts Shirley, McCord, Loudon, and Littleton. A stone foundation wall from this structure is visible just to the east of the present mill abutting the west wall of the ice house.

A descendant of Frederick Dubbs built the present mill about 1840. Some of the ironwork for the mill machinery were cast at the Cromer Foundry in Fort Littleton. The mill came under the ownership of the Baldwin family about 1850 and was operated by succeeding generations until 1960. The Baldwin family was also associated with the gristmill at Ft. Littleton. Elijah Baldwin was listed as proprietor of the Ft. Littleton gristmill in the 1880s through the 1910s. His mill is no longer extant. John Hunter Baldwin was the owner of the Burnt Cabins mill in the same period around the turn of the century. His son, Christian Stull Baldwin, took over operations sometime between 1928 and 1935 and made at least two modernizing upgrades to the machinery. A diesel engine was placed in a small addition on the south wall to provide an alternative power source. A charcoal roaster was installed on the first floor. C. Stull Baldwin ran the mill until his death in 1960.

From 1960 to 1969 the mill remained idle while the new owner made use of the property by cutting its timber. The present owners bought the gristmill property in 1969 and put the mill back in working order. They succeeded in adding the mill to the National Register of Historic Places, set up a campground nearby for tents and RVs, and sell wheat flours and cornmeal products ground by the mill's original water-powered machinery.

Sources:

Blattenberger, John D. National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form. U. S. Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service. Completed February 1, 1980.

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